

VZCZCXRO1382
RR RUEHRG
DE RUEHSO #0726/01 2392032
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 272032Z AUG 07
FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7389
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 8500
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC 2874
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 2408
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 2835
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2110
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ 3450
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1179
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0539
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 3734
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 8276
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 0153
RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO 0150
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA 0019
RUEHBQ/AMEMBASSY BISSAU 0005
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 SAO PAULO 000726

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SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR WHA/BSC, OES/IHA AND S/GAC
NSC FOR TOMASULO
AID/W FOR LAC/AA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOVSO](#) [CITIO](#) [EAID](#) [TSPL](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: BRAZIL: MOVING FORWARD ON BILATERAL HEALTH ISSUES

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Summary

1. (SBU) The government of Brazil is interested in increasing bilateral health cooperation with the United States and particularly in setting up joint programs in Africa, especially in the area of training medical technicians. According to Brazilian contacts, working together on health issues is of strategic importance. In addition to coordinating national strategies, Amazonas State is seeking U.S. assistance in battling malaria.

2. (SBU) During his visit to Rio de Janeiro as head of the U.S. delegation to the 15th Pan Am Games, Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Michael Leavitt discussed bilateral health cooperation with Brazilian counterparts. Ambassador Clifford Sobel, HHS Office of Global Health Affairs Director William Steiger, HHS Office of Global Health Affairs Americas Director Rosaly Correa-de-Araujo and notetaker accompanied Secretary Leavitt. End Summary.

Bilateral Health Cooperation

2. (SBU) Noting that he has served as a researcher and professor at the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ) for 27 years, Health Minister Jose Gomes Temporao stated that he views bilateral cooperation on health issues as not only extremely important, but as an area of strategic interest for both the United States and Brazil. Secretary Leavitt responded that with President Bush's and President Lula's recent calls for increased interaction between our two countries, a robust health agenda could serve as a fundamental area of common interest. He stated that he looked forward to having a health attache seconded soon to the Embassy in Brasilia.

Joint Commission Review

13. (SBU) Health Ministry International Relations Minister Santiago Alcazar pointed to the "excellent" work of the joint commission on health issues as a starting point for further activities. He noted that the commission had established five areas of bilateral cooperation, discussed the ethical requirements of research on human subjects, made clear that there was no intention to change health regulations or legislation in the United States or Brazil, and focused on cooperation in third countries, especially in curbing the spread of malaria.

14. (SBU) Commending the commission's goals, Secretary Leavitt said that Brazilian efforts to train medical workers overseas complements U.S. programs in Latin America and potential activity in Africa. He noted that the United States would be interested in learning how Brazil trains medical technicians and that the United States and Brazil could possibly cooperate on mounting joint projects. Concurring with Secretary Leavitt's idea, Minister Temporao said that Brazil has trained approximately 300,000 medical technicians already and would like to learn about our experience in Panama. He added that Brazil is curious about U.S. hospital care because Brazil wants to improve hospital quality. Brazil would also like to learn more about Medicare and Medicaid and how they work with HMOs as well as organizing a healthcare system with public payments and private providers. Noting that FIOCRUZ already has an established relationship with the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), FIOCRUZ President Paulo Buss asked Secretary Leavitt to press for even greater cooperation between the two bodies. Secretary Leavitt said we would be pleased to add these issues to our bilateral health agenda.

FIOCRUZ Efforts in Africa

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15. (SBU) FIOCRUZ President Buss noted that President Lula is interested in opening a FIOCRUZ office in Mozambique and that this entity would have ties to the African Union in Addis Ababa. This project could create medical training courses and train public health professionals, particularly in Portuguese-speaking African countries. FIOCRUZ has already established a school of public health in Angola, offering a top-level master's program to 35 students. FIOCRUZ is also assisting Mozambique's counterpart institution in creating a similar Master's program in Mozambique. The proposed school will have regular exchanges with FIOCRUZ's Master's program in Angola, focusing on diagnosing infectious diseases. Brazil is exploring a similar initiative in Guinea-Bissau, he added. FIOCRUZ would be interested in partnering with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Global Health Affairs to work on some of these ideas. Basso also suggested creating an NIH-FIOCRUZ working group on infectious diseases.

Amazonas State Meeting

16. (SBU) During a separate meeting with Amazonas State Secretary for Planning and Development Denis Minev, Secretary Leavitt asked if Amazonas State had an interest in the United States helping battle the state's increasing malaria problem. When Tropical Medicine Foundation of Amazonas (FMT-AM) President Sinesio Talhari noted that the Amazonas State Government is working hard to control malaria, FMT-AM Specialist in Malaria Investigation Marcus Vincius Guimaraes de Lacerda added that even with the federal government assisting, malaria growth is difficult to curb. Lacerda said that the sheer size of Amazonas State and the rapid growth of pockets of inhabitants outside the capital, Manaus, make anti-malaria efforts challenging. Distributing bed nets could be a good strategy for battling malaria, he added. FMT-AM President Talhari stated that malaria resistance, the need for newer drugs, and the lack of training and technology are additional difficulties. Secretary Minev added that testing for malaria takes a long time, meaning that farmers, who are often from the rural, difficult-to-reach and more highly-prone to malaria areas, lose labor time and prefer to not get tested. Secretary Leavitt responded that joint research seems like

a potential area of cooperation as a possible first step in looking at fighting the spread of malaria.

Areas for Joint Work

17. (SBU) Secretary Leavitt identified several priority areas for joint work in which the United States would primarily provide technical assistance. The two sides discussed the development of a Biosafety Level 4 laboratory in Brazil; exploration for the creation of a training center for health-care workers in the Southern Cone, modeled after the Regional Health-Care Training Center in Panama that is part of the health component of the President's Initiative to Advance the Cause of Social Justice in the Western Hemisphere; the exchange of scientific experts between Brazilian and American institutions; the Promotion of pharmaceutical research and development in Brazil; and joint work on malaria and HIV/AIDS in Portuguese-speaking Africa. These priority areas would be part of a U.S.-Brazil Health Alliance to serve Latin America.

18. (SBU) Along with the other members of the U.S. Delegation, Secretary Leavitt and Ambassador Sobel attended the opening

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ceremonies of the XV Pan American Games on July 13, and the next day met with the U.S. baseball and men's gymnastics teams. The Secretary and Ambassador Sobel also dined with Pernambuco State

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Governor Eduardo Campos and granted a number of interviews with Brazilian and international media outlets (print and television), at FIOCRUZ, at the Pan American Athletes' Village and in a separate press opportunity at his hotel.

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19. (U) This cable was coordinated with Embassy Brasilia, HHS, and approved by Ambassador Sobel.
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